

Residents cry foul as city opens temporary dump sites

Neighbours angered by plan to start up 19 short-term landfills in 'public's backyard'

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Toronto's Sunnyside Park is a natural draw for west-enders on the type of hot summer days forecast for the city this weekend: There's a wading pool for the toddlers, Gus Ryder Pool for the big kids, a lakeside bike path, boardwalk and a new \$1-million water curtain to make Lake Ontario safe for swimming at the adjacent beach.

But the five-day old municipal workers' strike has left the pools drained and the lake water's quality untested by public health. Now, a large temporary garbage dump promises to significantly change the views, smell and traffic patterns near the historic waterfront park.

The city announced 19 new drop-off locations yesterday that will accept double-bagged trash and organics for the duration of the strike, in a move that has angered many residents living near the temporary landfills.

"You don't put a garbage dump in a waterfront park. I understand there's a lot of difficult choices, but that's the dumbest choice," said Chris Holcroft, a volunteer with the Green 13 environmental group, who vowed to fight the Sunnyside site. "It's the public's backyard."

The dumps, each surrounded by metal fences, were opened at 11 city parks, six arenas, a wastewater treatment plant and a roadway in the Port Lands. Garbage will not be cleared from the temporary landfills until the strike ends.

City manager Joseph Pennachetti said the locations were chosen in consultation with the province's environment ministry. He said each site had to be on city-owned property, accessible by vehicles, not too close to residential buildings and large enough to accommodate a large volume of waste.

Sixteen of the sites were used during Toronto's 2002 garbage strike. Each is open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. for residents and yellow-bag commercial customers, free of charge and with no bag limits. The existing seven transfer stations remain open.

The dumps will have 24-hour security, pest and odour controls, the city said. Toronto's medical officer of health, Dr. David McKeown, said there is no evidence of a health hazard.

"A well-managed temporary garbage storage site, even if it is a large one, does not create a health hazard. It may be unattractive, cause odour, which can certainly be unpleasant, but this in itself does not pose a threat to human health."

That was little comfort to Deborah Jules and some of her neighbours, who tend a garden in Christie Pits Park. The dump site is a wading pool less than 50 metres from the garden.

Ms. Jules, recalling the rodent problems of the 2002 garbage strike, said she's worried the plants will be ravaged. "This neighbourhood was infested with rats," she said.

At Fergy Brown Park on the Eglinton Flats off Jane Street, 10 men crowded around two picnic tables, sucking on mango seeds, playing dominoes - just three metres from the parking lot-turned-garbage dump.

Sylvester Francis, 71, who lives in a senior's residence near the park, said the mountain of garbage he

expects will pile up will drive people away. "I'll just sit at home and mope," he said.

Milton Brown of Etobicoke said the park attracts 500 to 600 sports fans every weekend to watch cricket and soccer matches. "As it is, when you come here, there's nowhere to park," he said, "but if there's garbage stinking it up, they'll cancel the games."

Canadian Union of Public Employees Ontario president Sid Ryan said the temporary dumps are evidence the city is preparing for a long strike, although officials had promised from the outset to open new sites if the walkout lasted more than five days.

Still, there was little hope the labour dispute would be settled this week, even as negotiations between the city and its 24,000 indoor and outdoor workers continued yesterday. "Progress is very slow," said CUPE spokeswoman Pat Daley. "It's not going to end this week."

Mayor David Miller said the talks with the two unions are "ongoing" and "there has been some progress," but he declined to say on what issues.

With reports by Jennifer

Lewington and The Canadian Press

Garbage, garbage everywhere

The city yesterday announced that 19 new garbage drop-off points on city property that will help to store Toronto's garbage for the duration of the strike. Sixteen of these were used during the last garbage strike in 2002. The move has sparked anger among local residents over the smell and health concerns.

LOCATIONS OF TRANSFER STATIONS AND TEMPORARY DROP-OFF SITES

Ingram Transfer Station 50 Ingram Drive

Bermondsey Transfer Station 188 Bermondsey Road

Commissioners Street Transfer Station 400 Commissioners Street

Disco Transfer Station 120 Disco Road

Dufferin Transfer Station 35 Vanley Crescent

Victoria Park Transfer Station 3350 Victoria Park Avenue

Scarborough Transfer Station 1 Transfer Place

Ted Reeve Arena NE corner of Main Street and Gerrard Street E.

Sir Casmir Gzowski Park Parking area south of Lake Shore Boulevard W., west of Sunnyside Park

Etienne Brulé Park Old Mill Road at Catherine Street

North Toronto Memorial Arena North of Eglinton Avenue, east of Oriole Parkway, enter off Edith Drive

Scarborough Arena 75 Birchmount Road, in parking lot.

Eglinton Flats (1) Enter off Jane Street

Sunnyside Park Parking area south of Lake Shore Boulevard W., between Ellis Avenue and Colborne Lodge Drive

Caledonia Park 1135 Caledonia Road, in parking lot.

Moss Park South of Shuter Street, north of Queen Street E.

Villiers St. Paved roadway between Saulter Street and Cherry Street

Eglinton Flats (2) Enter off Emmett Avenue

Wishing Well Park North of 401, west side of Pharmacy Avenue, in parking lot.

Earls court Park West side of Lansdowne Avenue, north of Davenport Road

North York Centennial Centre 580 Finch Avenue W., in parking lot

Highland Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant 51 Beechgrove Drive, in parking lot

Christie Pits Enter off Crawford Street, north of Bloor

George Bell Arena 215 Ryding Avenue, south of St. Clair Avenue E.

Taylor Creek Park Enter off Haldon Avenue, in parking lot at end of roadway

York Mills Arena 2539 Bayview Avenue, enter off York Mills Road, east of Bayview

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